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ABSTRACT

A study examined the effects of employee turnover (employees who were fired, laid off, retired, or left for other reasons) and mobility (employees who left one newspaper to work for another newspaper or other journalism medium) on small daily newspapers (under 25,000 circulation). The study surveyed 300 newsroom editors and 600 reporters (with a response rate of 46% for editors and 43.5% for reporters) for information about the town where their newspapers were located, the newspaper, staff size, number of staffers who left and reasons reporters gave when they left the newspaper within the preceding 12 month period. Editors were asked to list their newspaper's advantages and disadvantages, what they thought of their newspaper's quality, management training they had received, and how they used such basic management skills as feedback and evaluation. Work history and basic demographic data were gathered from both editors and reporters, and reporters were asked job satisfaction questions. Findings revealed that the turnover and mobility rates were generally similar to those of small businesses or the media in general, although high job movement did take place on the smallest newspapers (circulation under 4,999) responding to the survey. Results showed that a larger issue than turnover and mobility was the small staff size of these newspapers, which editors listed as a top concern and reporters listed as a main complaint. (Nine tables of data are included, and three pages of footnotes are appended.) (MM)

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TURNOVER AND MOBILITY:

A MANAGEMENT PROBLEM FOR SMALL DAILIES?

for presentation at the
Portland, Oregon, Annual Convention of the
Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication
July 1 - 5, 1988

By

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What happens to journalists on small daily newspapers? Underpaid newsroom employees come and go, using small dailies as stepping stones to bigger and better jobs. If employers would pay more money, they'd keep good employees. High turnover is, has been, and probably will continue to be, a major problem on small dailies.[1] Right?

Not necessarily. Results of this national survey of daily newspapers with circulations of less than 25,000, conducted in January 1988, contradict some often-repeated newspaper folklore.

This study set out to gather basic data on employee turnover and mobility and the causes of such movement. For purposes of this study, turnover indicates those who were fired, laid off or retired, left for other reasons or quit working entirely. Mobility refers only to those who left one newspaper to work on another newspaper, or in rare cases, to work as a journalist in another medium, such as broadcast news.

This study also looked at the characteristics of these employees and their editors.

This particular group of newspapers was selected because it is 66.8 percent of all the 1,657 dailies in the United States. While the circulation may vary from less than 1,000 to 25,000, these newspapers provide vital information to more than 1,000 communities across the country.[2]

Neither the literature nor national statistics indicates the number of journalists who leave small dailies or their

reasons for leaving. Little is known about the movement of these journalists from one newspaper to another but many stories are circulated about excessive turnover. Even less is known about these employees or the editors who manage these newsrooms. It was necessary to gather this basic data before other aspects of the causes of turnover could be probed.

Other businesses and professions address turnover as a management problem that costs money, and major efforts are made to stop the flow of talented, valued employees.[3] Dissatisfaction with the job often leads to turnover in other industries.[4] This study looked the employee turnover and mobility on small daily newspapers to see if job movement poses similar problems for these newspapers.

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METHOD

A list of newspapers of this circulation size was compiled using the 1987 Editor and Publishers International Yearbook. Three hundred newspapers were selected using a systematic sampling procedure to reach 300 newsroom editors and 600 reporters who received mail questionnaires.

A packet, containing questionnaires for the two journalists and for the editor, was mailed to each newspaper addressed to the newsroom editor. That person was asked to distribute two sealed questionnaires to two journalists on the staff.

The questionnaires to editors asked for information about the town where their newspapers were located, the newspaper, the staff size, the number of staffers who left and reasons reporters gave when they left the newspaper within the past 12 months. Editors were asked to list their newspaper's major advantages and disadvantages, what they thought of their newspaper's quality, management training they had received, and how they used such basic management skills as feedback and evaluations. Their work history and other basic demographic data also were gathered.

Similar demographic information was asked of the journalists. Sub editors such as feature editors or wire editors, and photo journalists were included and the term journalist is used in this study to distinguish these employees from editors. Open-ended questions provided respondents a chance to add other information.

In addition, these journalists answered to a job satisfaction series of questions provided by Dr. Merrill Samuelson.[5] This tool had been used in the late 1950s and early 1960s to measure newsroom satisfaction on daily newspapers, not necessarily of the size included in this study.

Response rate was 46 percent for editors and 43.5 percent for reporters and was representative of the newspapers across the country by circulation size, i.e. under 5,000, under 10,000, etc. to 25,000. The percentage of each sub group

responding in this survey nearly matches the total population. See Table 1.

Table 1

RESPONSES FROM EDITORS AND REPORTERS
BY CIRCULATION SIZE OF NEWSPAPERS

Size of Newspapers	Total newspapers	Reporters responses	Editors' responses
under 4,999	222 (20 %)	37 (14 %)	20 (14 %)
5,000 to 9,999	418 (38 %)	81 (32 %)	41 (30 %)
10,000 to 14,999	236 (21 %)	67 (26 %)	40 (29 %)
15,000 to 19,999	138 (13 %)	34 (13 %)	18 (13 %)
20,000 to 25,000	93 (8 %)	36 (14 %)	19 (14 %)

(figures rounded off)

This study made a particular effort to reach non-responding newspapers with two follow-up mailings and phone calls to 170 newspapers where neither newsroom editors nor journalists had returned the questionnaires. A large number of these editors when reached by phone specifically said they either never responded to surveys or had no time for such research. This may be a particularly important group to focus on for future research.

RESULTS

The turnover rate for these newspaper is 11.2 percent and the mobility rate is 13.8 percent, a total of 25 percent staff movement at these newspapers within a 12-month period, as reported by the editors.

The rate of turnover is similar to that of newspaper workers according to U. S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.[6] These national statistics shows a range of job movement from 10.7 percent for professional employees to 39.7 percent for those in private household occupations. The Bureau classifies editors and reporters in this professional specialty group that in 1986 had a turnover rate of 11.5 percent.

Weaver and Wilhoit looked at where U. S. journalists thought they would be in five years, and their study shows that 10.6 percent plan to be in other professions, 1.7 percent plan to retire, and 5.1 percent are unsure where they will be.[7] This would results in a turnover rate of 12.3 percent as indicated by the future plans of these employees, a measure used in other employment groups to determine job turnover. Figures for small businesses show a turnover range of from 17 to 23 percent,[8] and it may be reasonable to compare these small dailies to such businesses.

When both turnover and mobility are combined, the figure is comparable to data from a 1971 turnover study of Florida dailies of all sizes which said that 25 percent of the news-editorial workers left in a year.[9]

Two mobility studies conducted by the Institute for Journalist Education at Northwestern University, aimed at all newspapers of 150,000 circulation and a sample of those of less than 150,000 circulation, indicate that 25.5 percent of white journalists worked for a year or less for their first

newspaper employer and 29.1 percent worked between one and two years before moving to another newspaper.[10]

However, national mobility figures dealing with these specific small daily newspaper employees are not available for comparison, and many studies use the two terms interchangeably. For example, the turnover rate for small businesses includes those who have left a particular type of work but does not identify the number who leave a specific employment situation.

The rate reported for newsroom employees on Florida dailies makes no distinction between turnover and mobility. The U. S. Bureau of Labor Statistics no longer tracks mobility. The distinction was made in this study by the editors who were asked to recall reasons journalists gave when they left the specific job.

Even so, turnover, when combined with mobility, is not as high as anecdotal information might suggest. This study produced its own horror story of a small newspaper with a 270 percent turnover in one year. In general, fewer newsroom employees, the higher the number who left during the past year, for whatever reasons. See Table 2 for a scattergram showing the inverse relationship between staff size and percentage of turnover. The Spearman correlation coefficients of .4960 and .4472 for the number of fulltime journalists hired and the number who left are significant at $>.000$.

The percentage who left these newspapers varied from 43 percent for the smallest staffs (from 1 to 5 workers) to 13 percent for staffs of more than 25 newsroom employees. See Table 3 for specifics according to staff size.

So, while turnover and mobility is less than has been assumed from anecdotal accounts, such job movement may be a management problem, particularly for those newspapers with small staffs. (The staff size for newspapers in this study varied from under 5 to 38.) For this reason, the study looked at some possible causes.

IS TURNOVER A CONCERN?

Though managers of other businesses often address turnover as a major problem, editors in this survey did not consider turnover or mobility specific problems. When asked to list major concerns facing their newspapers, the most frequently listed issue was outside forces, such as a poor economy and competition.

However, editors listed not enough staff members, inexperienced staff or the quality of staffers as concerns. Combined with those who specifically mentioned turnover, the effective staffing of these newspapers was a concern. See Table 4.

Positive Aspects of Turnover

Before assuming that turnover and mobility are management problems, Bluedorn and other list the positive aspects of turnover.[11] For example, entry-level work need not be

Table 2

Scattergram plotting number of staff members who left by percentage of staff who left

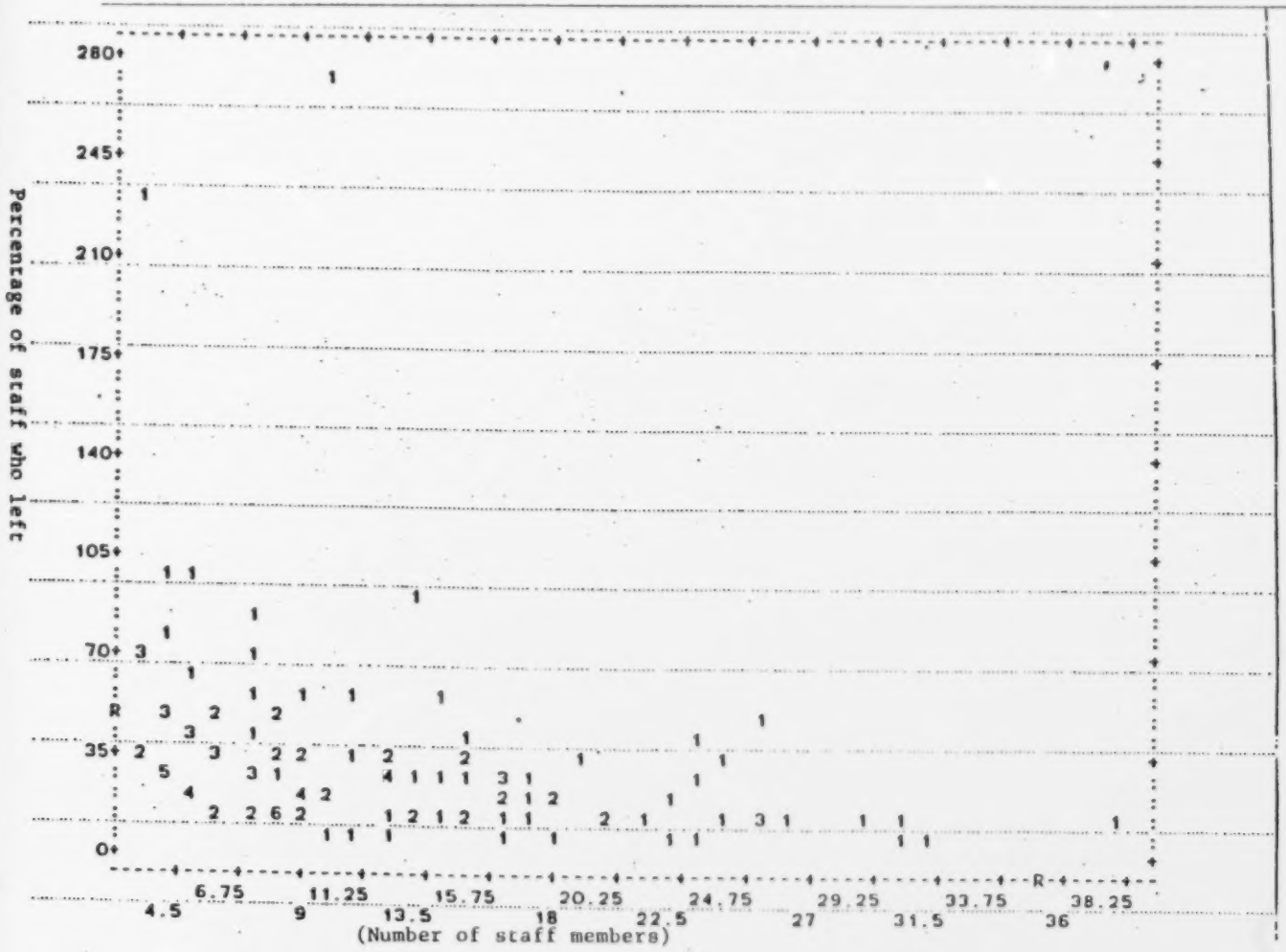

Table 3

NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES, NEWSPAPERS SHOWING TURNOVER AND MOBILITY BY STAFF SIZE

Staff size	No. of workers	No. of newspapers	No. who left	No. who stayed	Turnover	Mobility
1 to 5	118	20	51 (43%)	67 (56%)	18 (15%)	33 (28%)
6 to 10	383	40	124 (32%)	259 (67%)	73 (19%)	51 (13%)
11 to 15	350	24	97 (28%)	253 (72%)	48 (14%)	49 (14%)
16 to 20	260	16	49 (19%)	211 (81%)	31 (12%)	18 (07%)
21 to 25	272	12	60 (21%)	212 (78%)	27 (10%)	33 (12%)
over 25	184	6	23 (13%)	161 (88%)	8 (04%)	15 (08%)

Table 4

MAJOR CONCERNS OF NEWSPAPER EDITORS

1. Outside forces (the economy, competition)
   (78 editors)
2. Lack of staff
   (77 editors)
3. Lack of resources (equipment, color, money or news hole)
   (75 editors)
4. Problems with other departments
   (50 editors)
5. Lack of experienced staff
   (40 editors)
6. Management, publisher, owner problems
   (39 editors)
7. Low pay
   (33 editors) not clear whether their concern is with their pay or their employees' pay.)
8. Staff turnover
   (28 editors)
9. Other problems
   (25 editors)

Each editor was asked to list five problems in order of importance, but the above tabulation does not weigh the answers.

performed by higher-paid, more senior employees. Turnover rovides an opportunity for promotions and new assignments among the remaining employees, rewarding them with increased responsibilities and challenges. In the news business, some educators have suggested, new employees may look at news situations with a fresh view and produce good news reporting where employees who have been in the community for a long time may take a situation for granted and not see the news value. Editors often deal with this by reassigning reporters to new beats on larger newspapers, but this may not be as feasible on newspapers with very small news staffs.

Negative Aspects of Turnover

Negative aspects of turnover, however, are that new employees require training and socialization both in the newsroom and in the community.[12] Newcomers may not have access to news sources immediately. While it has not been documented and may be a topic for future research, a constantly changing staff may affect both the quality of the news product and the credibility of the newspaper.

In other businesses, employers consider that turnover costs money and reduces productivity. They include the costs of advertising for replacements, benefit costs, training and severance pay.[13]

Newspapers may avoid these specific costs, such as advertising for new employees, because a ready pool of applicants appears to be available. But it still costs money to replace employees. Indirect costs of turnover include time spent reading resumes, making selections and conducting interviews; staff time to train new employees, increased workloads while staff changes are put into effect, and possible loss of goodwill and reputation among news sources, the community and other staffers. Staff morale may be lowered when those employees consider valuable co-workers move on to bigger newspapers or other careers.

Other businesses attempt to reduce turnover by testing employees for job satisfaction and by training managers in

effective techniques that will assure that workers remain satisfied and motivated.[14]

CAUSES OF TURNOVER AND MOBILITY

The results of this study suggest four areas that might affect turnover and mobility on these smaller dailies: age, job satisfaction, low salaries and supervision and management of these employees.

Age

In other businesses age is a factor in turnover, and this may be an important aspect for these newspapers.[15] The literature suggests more job movement among young workers in general, but does not specifically address journalists.[16] More than half of the responding journalists were under 30 years old. Those between 20 and 25 make up 32 percent of the group, and those between 26 and 30 add another 25 percent. A smaller group, 14 percent, are between 31 and 35 years old; 7 percent are between 36 and 40; and 22 percent are over 40.

Weaver and Wilhoit's information on the American journalist in all facets of the media, including reporters and editors, shows that journalists are younger than the total U. S. work force.[17] Reporters in this study are even younger.

Smaller newspaper are the most likely places where new journalists will be hired. A study by the Institute for Journalism Education (1986) shows that 62 percent of new journalists in 1985 were hired by newspapers of 25,000 circulation and under.[18]

Even so, some employees remain at these small dailies for several years, and a general pattern of job hopping is not supported by this survey's results. Of the 261 journalists reporting their own work history, 50 percent gave reasons for leaving their last newspaper job, but the remaining 50 percent were still working at their first newspaper job. Only 23 percent reported having had a second newspaper move; and only 11 percent indicated they had left a third or fourth job. When asked for reasons for leaving previous jobs, 23 percent said they moved to larger newspapers, but 34 percent indicated a variety of essential what might be called time-out-from-work reasons. See Table 5

Table 5

FREQUENCY (BY PERCENTAGES) LEAVING EACH JOB BY REASONS GIVEN

Reasons	Number leaving past jobs			
	Job 1	Job 2	Job 3	Job 4
Larger paper	30(23%)	8(13%)	0(0%)	0(0%)
Better paper	12(9%)	13(22%)	3(17%)	0(0%)
Better location	16(12%)	13(22%)	4(22%)	3(30%)
Chance of promotion	12(9%)	6(10%)	6(33%)	2(20%)
Better pay	16(12%)	6(10%)	2(11%)	2(20%)
Other*	45(34%)	14(23%)	3(17%)	3(30%)

*other includes time out from the work force for such reasons as motherhood or marriage, school, military service, fired, laid off, left because of conflict with management, newspaper closed or relocated because of spouse's job move.

Job Satisfaction

Job dissatisfaction, according to the literature, is a major reason workers leave other employment situations. Identifying those dissastified employees is a way to predict who will leave, and removing the causes of dissatisfaction were possible are considered ways to reduce turnover. Another predictor is simply to ask workers where they intend to be in the near future.[19] This study looked at both these issues.

It may be that general job satisfaction and behavioral intention are not as valid criteria for news personnel on the dailies in this survey because journalists responding indicate they basically like their jobs, yet 75 percent indicate that they do not intend to remain at the same newspaper for more than three years.

Another approach is to look at job satisfaction from the view of motivation such as Herzberg's motivation-hygiene theory as applied to workers in other work situations. Herzberg's theory separates work-related satisfiers from things that cause dissatisfaction. His avoidance of pain stimuli or hygiene issues are the extrinsic characteristics of the jobs, such as company policies, supervision, relationship with supervisors, work conditions, salary, relationships with peers, status and security. Even when all these needs are met, the result is not necessarily a satisfied employee. The motivation depends upon the intrinsic qualities of the work itself, which include the opportunity for achievement,

recognition, the content of the work, responsibility, and the opportunity for growth and advancement. When Shaver applied Herzberg's theory to journalists, he found that the distinctions made by Herzberg in relation to workers' job satisfaction and dissatisfaction did apply to journalists.[21]

It is the extrinsic qualities of the work, such as the workload, rather than the work itself that then appears to be of concern. Such qualities can be addressed by management.

Job satisfaction in this survey was assessed by asking journalists four questions in 13 categories tabulated on a one to four scale, with one being most satisfied and four being least satisfied. In only three, extrinsic work categories - future in the profession, attitude toward supervisors, and management attitude toward the newspaper - did journalists indicate they were more dissatisfied than satisfied. Salary, one of these indicators of dissatisfaction, will be explored later.

In the category used to determine whether these journalists felt they had a future in the profession, 93 percent said if they had it to do over again, they probably would not go into newspaper work; 76 percent felt their jobs were only stepping stones to other professions; 87 percent responded that young people entering the field were making a mistake. Yet 93 percent also said the work is more satisfying than another line of work.

Similar high dissatisfaction was noted in responses to questions about management's attitude toward the newspaper. Seventy-four percent thought management lacked foresight and planning and 71 percent thought their newspapers were not well run.

The third area where the majority of responses indicated dissatisfaction was journalists' attitude toward their supervisors. Eighty-five percent answered that they thought their supervisors didn't show confidence in staff members and 68 percent said their supervisors didn't go out of their way to help. There was also concern about the equitable distribution of salary when 52 percent of the respondents said the best people didn't always get the highest salaries, and 64 percent said management was not quick to hand out merit raises.

Other categories which showed journalists more satisfied than dissatisfied included few constraints on the job; job status; equity of status distribution; congruence of values; service to society; opportunity for self expression; future in this job; and job security.

This suggests that the areas of dissatisfaction center on management issues.

Workload versus Salary

The reasons journalists gave for leaving jobs does not support the assumption that these journalists move for more money, as only 16 percent said they left their first job for better pay. Subsequent job moves show money became less of a

motivator as only 6 percent, 2 percent and 2 percent listed better pay as a reason for additional job moves.

An open-ended question in the survey provided these journalists a chance to list likes and disliked of their present job and the profession. Workload was mentioned more often than salary when discussing the profession, in general, and was matched by salary when addressing dislikes of the current job. See Table 6.

Table 6

REPORTER'S REASONS FOR LIKING AND DISLIKING THE PROFESSION AND THE CURRENT JOB

Like Most	Profession	Current job
The work itself (being a reporter)	40 %	19 %
Personal achievement	8 %	23 %
Personal growth	26 %	22%
Serving others	16 %	10 %
Recognition	8 %	3 %
Management	0 %	3 %
Co-workers	0 %	12 %
Other	2 %	7 %
	(n =238)	(n = 234)
Like Least	**Profession**	**Current job**
The work itself	4 %	3 %
Salary	30 %	28%
Work load, conditions	33 %	28%
Internal pressures	4 %	21 %
External pressures	9 %	4 %
No chance for growth	1 %	3 %
Lack of status	6 %	1 %
Other	12 %	12 %
	(n = 234)	(n = 231)

Yet salary was what editors listed as the major disadvantage of these small papers. Entry level journalists in this survey earn an average of $243 per week, according to information provided by their editors. The combined average salary as reported by the currently employed responding journalists, from entry-level employees to those with more than 10 years experience as journalists, averaged $290 a week. Women's salaries were an average of 12 percent less than men's salaries among those currently employed at these newspapers, and neither age nor years in the business showed any correlation to this difference.

These figures compare with national salaries for U. S. media as reported by the Weaver and Wilhoit study showing a personal median income of $19,000, with males earning $21,000 and females earning $14,984.23

According to the Feb. 12, 1988, College Placement Council survey based on 1987-88 job recruiting on college campuses, college graduates with communications or journalism degrees earn the lowest salaries of the categories included (accounting, banking and finance, human resources, institutional management, electrical engineering, nursing and aerospace.) Communications or journalism graduates earned between $12,480 and $24,000 per year, with an average salary of $18,624.

The median entry level salary reported in this survey amounts to $12,636 annually.

Editors were asked to compare salaries paid to their staffers to salaries paid on similar-sized newspapers, and to compare those salaries to salaries of other professionals in their towns. Sixty-six percent said salaries paid to their staffers were fair or poor when compared to other professionals in their towns, but fewer thought salaries paid to their employees were fair or poor in comparison to salaries paid at other newspapers of similar size. See Table 7.

Table 7

EDITOR'S ASSESSMENT OF SALARIES FOR JOURNALISTS COMPARED TO OTHER NEWSPAPERS AND COMPARED TO OTHER PROFESSIONALS IN THEIR TOWNS

Salaries	Compared to papers of similar size	Compared to professionals in your town
excellent	8 %	1 %
good	24 %	8 %
average	28 %	25 %
fair	24 %	27 %
poor	16 %	39 %
	(n = 135)	(n = 134)

On the more positive note, editors listed specific advantages their newspapers might offer journalists. Major advantages editors listed were opportunity to gain experience, freedom, a good paper to work for and good co-workers. These categories are the result of an open-ended question, grouped according to the first item mentioned by each editor, and are not mutually exclusive. See Table 8.

Table 8

EDITORS' ASSESSMENT OF NEWSPAPER ADVANTAGES, DISADVANTAGES

Major Advantages	Major disadvantages
Gain experience (25 %)	Low pay (44 %)
Freedom (23 %)	Heavy workload (26 %)
Good paper (16 %)	No advancement (7 %)
Good co-workers (11 %)	Lack of Supervision (5 %)
Good management (7)	Pressure/stress (2 %)
Love of profession (5 %)	Poor Products (1 %)
Steady income (3 %)	No challenge (1 %)
Other reasons (5 %)	Other reasons (10 %)
No reasons (5 %)	No reasons (8 %)
n = 122	n = 119

Although editors listed low pay as the major disadvantage, it was second on the list of what the journalists themselves disliked most about the profession, and was tied for first in the list of what these journalists disliked most about their current job. Yet, as previously noted, salary was seldom the major reason listed by these journalists for changing jobs. Only 12 percent gave "better pay" as a reason for leaving former jobs.

At the same time, when asked if they thought their salaries should be higher, 4 percent of the responding journalists said their salaries should stay as they are, and 24 percent thought they deserved at least 30 percent more than they were now receiving. See Table 9.

Table 9

HOW JOURNALISTS RESPONDED TO THE QUESTION:
TAKING EVERYTHING INTO CONSIDERATION, I WOULD SAY
THAT A JUST AND FAIR SALARY FOR MY PRESENT WORK WOULD BE:

Response	Salary change by percentage
10 (4 %)	stay as it is (current salary is adequate)
33 (13 %)	1 to 9 %
84 (33 %)	10 to 19 %
66 (26 %)	20 TO 29 %
62 (24 %)	more than 30 %

This information supports Herzberg's contention that salary, while it may be a dissatisfier for workers, is seldom a motivator for workers in general.[24]

Management

Editors in this survey, in reporting their own job history, are journalists of many years of experience, and many have held other positions as editors. Forty-five percent have had more than four years experience at their current newspaper, and 95 percent have had more than four years experience as journalists themselves.

Yet they report little specific management training for their jobs. About a third answered that they had attended short-term seminars, but two thirds listed no specific management training. Whether a newspaper is privately owned or is part of chain appears to make no difference in the amount of training provided. Seventy-one percent of these newspapers

are owned by newspaper chains and 29 percent are privately owned.

Even those with some management training do not appear to apply the two management techniques, the use of feedback and formal evaluations chosen as indicators for this survey. No correlation exists between training and the applications of these two techniques.

Editors were asked how often they gave feedback to their reporters. The question was worded as follows: "I personally discuss the quality of each reporter's work with that person" and five options were given. Once a day, 4 percent; two or three time a week, 21 percent; once a week, 25 percent, once a month, 34 percent, less than once a month, 16 percent.

The literature suggests that feedback is an important technique used to keep employees motivated and satisfied with their work. It is a suggested technique that managers can use to reduce turnover.[25]

Formal evaluations procedures are often used in other businesses to let employees know where they stand. In this survey, however, only 52 percent of the editors said they had such procedures. Of those with evaluation systems, 72 percent thought their systems provided an adequate opportunity to evaluate their reporters' work and to provide direction.

CONCLUSIONS

Major conclusions of this study are:

1. Turnover and mobility are not out of line when compared to small businesses or to the media in general. However, high job movement does take place on the smallest newspapers responding to this survey.

2. Journalists working on these smaller dailies are younger than the general work force and younger than the U. S. media personnel, and younger workers do move more often.

3. Job satisfaction levels appear to be high but dissatisfaction with supervision and salary is evident.

4. A larger issue than turnover and mobility appears to be the small staff size of these newspapers. This prompts editors to list under-staffing as a top concern and journalists to list over-work as a main complaint.

Managers concerned with the movement of staff members may want to consider three approaches that may reduce such staff movement.

1. Managers may want to look at the specific needs of their staff members in the various age groups;

2. Managers can consider strategic planning to manage the workload.

3. Managers can look for alternatives to pay increases that may lessen dissatisfaction among employees.

Managing Three Age Groups

While the average age of the respondents matches the general assumption that these journalists are just entering the profession, they fit roughly into three groups - those just entering the profession who 20 to 25 years old; those from 26 to 40 years old, and those over 40.ists for more

This study found that while about one third of the youngest workers stay less than two years at their jobs, another group of almost that size, (26 percent) stayed at their first job for more than five years. That would provide a balance of more mature, experienced journalists on these newspaper staffs.

From a management point of view, then, it may be valid to look at these groups of workers: About 13 percent of the newcomers will or intend to more to larger newspapers; about 12 percent will leave the work force; The remaining employees fit into two groups, a mid-age group up to age forty that appears to be the most dissatisfied and an older group that appears to like working on these dailies and indicate a commitment to these community newspapers.

Management can accept the movement of these younger employees, unless as Gray said, the best and the brightest are the ones who leave for better paying jobs.[26] If managers see this as an important group to retain, they need to consider ways to socialize these younger people into their com-

munities[27], provide them with challenging assignments, and eventually, improve their salaries.

If this group is expendable, then the greatest contribution these editors can make to the profession will be to assure that this initial newsroom experience is the best possible training situation so that these bright, future journalists have a solid beginning for their careers. This will require attention to training, feedback, evaluations and challenging assignments.

Manager may make an effort to give these newcomers opportunity for on-going educational opportunities, to become members of professional organizations and to take part in regional professional development seminars. They can see that these reporters receive recognition in the profession by encouraging them to do quality pieces that can be entered into professional competition so they can build professional reputations.

The middle group of those in their mid to late thirtys, employees in this survey who responded most negatively to the job satisfaction questions, pose more of a challenge to managers. These employees may lack talent or ambition and for that reason have not moved on to other jobs. It appears, from comments from respondents, more likely that these workers have other commitments that require that they remain in the particular town. This may be the case in two-career families. Several specific responses to this survey indicate that members

of this age-group moved to the town when a spouse accepted a job, and their own careers took second place. If the points of dissatisfaction of this group can be addressed, these may become long-term employees who are both satisfied and productive.

Recognition, professional associations, and professional development seminars may have more long-term benefits to the newspaper than if similar opportunities are offered to the youngest members least likely to remain on the staff.

The oldest group, the over 40-year-old employees, appear to be those with a specific commitment to careers on these small dailies. Members of this group can become the mentors for the newcomers, the teachers who by example help develop the next generation of talent. But these older workers also need to be encouraged to upgrade their skills. They can benefit from opportunities for recognition both within the staff, in the profession, and within the community.

Managing the Workload

The most prominent management issue identified in this study, identified by both editors and journalists, is too much work and too few people to do it.

This is where management skills can be most effective. It may not be possible to hire additional people, but it is possible to realistically assess what a specific-size staff can reasonably accomplish without being pushed into overtime without pay or excessive hours which lead only to burnout.

Editors of these understaffed newspapers may be setting unreal expectations for their staffers. Responses to this survey indicate that these journalist are as frustrated by not being able to do a thorough job on an assignment as they are by the long hours.

Here are some of their comments:

> One of its pluses is also a minus. Small papers allow you do just about everything, and sometimes that gets to be taxing because you become overwhelmed by picky things and can't get into your writing on your beat as you should.
>
> Never enough time to do thing well because we are understaffed, working overtime without compensation because if I don't stay late it won't get done. Never can take time off without making another reporter overburdened covering for me.
>
> There's not much time to dig into investigative stuff on a small staff of four general assignment reporters.

These comments are not the gripings of poor workers, but the frustrations of those who want to do a good job.

To deal with this issue, managers can look at the strategic planning suggested by Greene and Roberts[28] and by involving the workers in the solution to the problem.

Managers, too, need to take responsibility for strategic planning of what can realistically be expected of their small staff. Leaving the job is the simplest response to burnout that results from unrealistic workloads. To reverse the situation will require strategic planning by managers to assure that they are making realistic demands on their workers. Priority setting by managers will help.

Overtime without pay, while it may assure that the city council meeting was covered late into the night, may be counter productive in the long-term commitment to the newspapers and in terms of the quality of work the staffers are able to produce.

Hranac and Brannen[29] suggest small businesses employ the simple concept of the quality circle which Ouchi says work so well in Japanese companies.[30] Let the workers identify the specific problem and come up with solutions that they can then support and carry out. This may be unfair if it has the employees buying into the overwork situation. But, even so, if the employees identify the problem and come up with their best solution, they are more likely to make it work than to complain about it. Involving the workers in the decision-making processes will give them a greater stake in the final product.

A note of caution. Most newspapers, because of the hierarchical structure, seldom give decision-making authority to employees. The quality circle concept work only if this decision making is shared. Otherwise, workers will soon realize that they are only being manipulated. In such cases, according to Hranac and Brannen, the technique will not be effective.[31]

Managing Low Salaries

While responding journalists seldom specifically listed salary as a reason for leaving their jobs, low salaries were the second concern, following the heavy workload.

Salaries are low when compared to the U. S. media and to other groups of college graduates.

Salaries are unlikely to be increased until publishers and owners see a connection between turnover and mobility and their bottom line profits. Future research may confirm that the pool of new journalists is becoming smaller as is suggested by the drop in news-editorial majors in current college programs, and whether there is a relationships between the quality of the product and profits.

Even in less profitable situations, there may be ways to include employees in profit sharing as an incentive to remain with the company, or to be rewarded for quality work.

Otherwise it is unlikely that top-quality college graduates will continue to enter a profession that pays less than almost any other group of college graduates.

Managers need to look at other ways to reward employees when the opportunity for pay raises does not exist. Recognition may be a short-term alternative.

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